

INTRODUCE

Well, good morning church! If I haven't met you yet, my name is Chris Martin, and I'm the Lead Pastor here.

If you've got your Bibles, and I hope you do, please open them up to 1 Samuel chapter 9. 1 Samuel 9. That's where we're going to be.

We want every person to have a hand on their Bible. You can open your phone or tablet to 1 Samuel 9. That's on page **231** in those Bibles under the chairs.

INTRODUCTION

So, we have a lot of text to get through this morning,

- and we're going to start by walking this whole chapter.
 - And I'm going to skip some verses
 - if they don't really feed into our purposes today,
- but I want you to be familiar with this narrative
- before we start into any applications for our lives today.

So, I want you to bear with me as we study the text, because the payoff comes in the application.

But let's start with the word. Verse 1:

1 SAMUEL 9:1-2

[1] There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, a Benjaminite, a man of wealth. [2] And he had a son whose name was Saul, a handsome young man. There was not a man among the people of Israel

more handsome than he. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people.

EXPLAIN: SAUL

So, our text is set up with an introduction to Kish's son, Saul.

- And he is described as handsome,
 - more handsome than all the people,
 - and he was taller than everyone else.
- So, he is the prototype!

But he is a mirror image of how Israel was.

- That is, from the outside he is very much
- what you would consider a king to be.
 - He seems like a godly man.
 - He seems to look the part.
- But as we'll find out, inwardly,
 - he wants to do his own thing.
 - He is rebellious.

This is exactly like Israel.

- Outwardly they say they want to follow God,
- but inwardly, they want to be just like all the other nations...
 - it's what we talked about last week.
- It was God + for them.

And God is going to use Saul to mirror to Israel their own sin.

And it's gonna work. You'll see. Verse 3:

1 SAMUEL 9:3, 5

[3] Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. So Kish said to Saul his son, "Take one of the young men with you, and arise, go and look for the donkeys."

[5] When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, "Come, let us go back, lest my father cease to care about the donkeys and become anxious about us."

EXPLAIN: DONKEYS

So, Kish loses some donkeys.

- So, he sends Saul and one of their young servants
- to go and find them.

And after they go through a bunch of places looking, but find no donkeys...

Verse 6:

1 SAMUEL 9:6-8

[6] But he said to him, "Behold, there is a man of God in this city, and he is a man who is held in honor; all that he says comes true. So now let us go there. Perhaps he can tell us the way we should go." [7] Then Saul said to his servant, "But if we go, what can we bring the man? For the bread in our sacks is gone, and there is no present to bring to the man of God. What do we have?" [8] The servant answered Saul again, "Here, I have with me a quarter of a shekel of silver, and I will give it to the man of God to tell us our way."

EXPLAIN: MAN OF GOD

So, this servant knows there's a man of God, or a seer, or a prophet in this city...

- And Saul's like, *"We don't have anything to give him."*
 - It was customary to take a gift
 - when one went to seek the help of a seer.

And interestingly, in verse 8 where it says,

- *"Here, I have with me a quarter shekel of silver."*

The more accurate translation would actually read,

- *"Here is found in my hand a quarter shekel of silver."*
- Almost as if the money turned up miraculously.

Verse 11:

1 SAMUEL 9:11-14

[11] As they went up the hill to the city, they met young women coming out to draw water and said to them, "Is the seer here?" [12] They answered, "He is; behold, he is just ahead of you. Hurry. He has come just now to the city, because the people have a sacrifice today on the high place. [13] As soon as you enter the city you will find him, before he goes up to the high place to eat. For the people will not eat till he comes, since he must bless the sacrifice; afterward those who are invited will eat. Now go up, for you will meet him immediately." [14] So they went up to the city. As they were entering the city, they saw Samuel coming out toward them on his way up to the high place.

EXPLAIN: GIRLS

So, they meet some girls as they're headed into the city.

- They inquire about the seer, and the girls say,
- *“He is...and you're lucky to have found him,*
 - *because he's here for a sacrifice.*
 - *But you better hurry.”*

So, they keep going, and who do they see coming out to meet them?

- It's none other than Samuel.
- The seer turns out to be Israel's greatest prophet!

Now, the text does a flashback. And this is the crux of the passage.

Verse 15:

1 SAMUEL 9:15-17

[15] Now the day before Saul came, the LORD had revealed to Samuel: [16] “Tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over my people Israel. He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have seen my people, because their cry has come to me.” [17] When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD told him, “Here is the man of whom I spoke to you! He it is who shall restrain my people.”

EXPLAIN: FLASHBACK

Now, this is the crux:

- So, the day before,
- God spoke to Samuel,
 - and told him all about this young man, Saul.
 - And he identifies him as Israel's future king.

So, flashback over, Samuel recognizes Saul...and look at verse 18:

1 SAMUEL 9:18-21

[18] Then Saul approached Samuel in the gate and said, "Tell me where is the house of the seer?" [19] Samuel answered Saul, "I am the seer. Go up before me to the high place, for today you shall eat with me, and in the morning I will let you go and will tell you all that is on your mind. [20] As for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, do not set your mind on them, for they have been found. And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for you and for all your father's house?" [21] Saul answered, "Am I not a Benjaminite, from the least of the tribes of Israel? And is not my clan the humblest of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then have you spoken to me in this way?"

EXPLAIN: ISRAEL'S HOPE

Saul finds out that Samuel is the seer.

But before Saul can say another word:

- Samuel invites him to stay for the sacrifice,
 - to eat,
 - to stay the night,
- and in the morning he would tell him all that is on his mind.

And oh, by the way, don't worry about those donkeys...they've been found.

And then he says something kind of cryptic.

- In verse 20 he says,
 - "And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel?
 - Is it not for you and for all your father's house?"

Now, this is a very tricky line, but I think the best way of reading it

- is all that is desirable in Israel
- refers to the people desire for a king like all the other nations.
- And Saul is to become the focus of the Israelite desire.

So, Saul is shocked by the fact that so much honor is being shown to him,

- That a young man from the least of all the tribes,
- should be the hope of all of Israel!?!

So, let's finish this up: verse 22.

1 SAMUEL 9:22-26

[22] Then Samuel took Saul and his young man and brought them into the hall and gave them a place at the head of those who had been invited, who were about thirty persons. [23] And Samuel said to the cook, "Bring the portion I gave you, of which I said to you, 'Put it aside.'" [24] So the cook took up the leg and what was on it and set them before Saul. And

Samuel said, “See, what was kept is set before you. Eat, because it was kept for you until the hour appointed, that you might eat with the guests.”

So Saul ate with Samuel that day. [25] And when they came down from the high place into the city, a bed was spread for Saul on the roof, and he lay down to sleep. [26] Then at the break of dawn Samuel called to Saul on the roof, “Up, that I may send you on your way.” So Saul arose, and both he and Samuel went out into the street.

EXPLAIN:

And we’ll save verse 27 for next week.

- But they go to the meal,
- and are seated in the place of honor.
- He is given the best set aside portion.

And he eats.

And he sleeps.

- And when Saul wakes at dawn,
- Samuel makes it seem like he’s sending them on their way.

TRANSITION

Now, the story continues, and we’ll pick up there next week.

But what the heck could this story have to do with us at all?!?

I mean, donkeys, and seers, and Saul...how are we to apply this?

Well, this is what you pay me for. Ok?

So, I want to draw two applications from the text for us.

APPLICATION 1: ORDINARY

The first application for us is this:

SLIDE GOD MOVES IN OUR ORDINARY

EXPLAIN: JUST SO HAPPENED

This is a case example of God's sovereign providence at work!

Just think of all the ordinary moments where things line up in this story:

It JUST SO HAPPENED that some donkeys that go missing!

- And Saul JUST SO HAPPENS to pick a specific servant.
- And it JUST SO HAPPENED that when Saul was ready to quit,
- the servant JUST SO HAPPENED to know about a seer,
- and he JUST SO HAPPENS to find some silver in his pocket.

And they JUST SO HAPPEN upon some girls, who tell them to hurry cause

- The seer JUST SO HAPPENED to be at that city for a sacrifice,
- And they JUST SO HAPPEN to enter right as he was coming,
- And the seer JUST SO HAPPENS to be Samuel,
- And he honors Saul as the answer to the hope of all of Israel.

AND NONE OF THIS WOULD HAVE HAPPENED

IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR THOSE LOST DONKEYS!

EXPLAIN: NO ONE KNEW!

Now, here's what's so remarkable...no one knew what was really going on!

Saul certainly didn't. He didn't wake up that morning saying,

- "I feel like something big's gonna happen today!"

It all just looked like ordinary life.

- "Dang! The donkeys are lost again? I'll get a servant!"

The only one who knew? Samuel.

Which is why I said verse 15 was the crux:

- Now the day before Saul came,
- the LORD had **revealed** to Samuel.

But to everyone else...

- God wasn't up to ANYTHING!
- Just some dumb lost donkeys!

APPLICATION

What does this tell us?

- It tells us that what God is often up to
- is wrapped up in very ordinary things,
- and thus, we can overlook it.

GOD MOVES IN OUR ORDINARY.

ILLUSTRATION: SUNRISE

So, this summer was my 20th spiritual birthday.

It was the summer of 2001 when I became a Christian. I was 16.

- And before I believed in God, as a teenager, I was a wreck.
- It kinda came to a head when I got arrested for shop-lifting.

Yes, your pastor has been arrested. You're like, "I knew I liked this church!"

And as a part of my sentence, I had to do 50-hours of community service.

- And one of the places I got service hours...
- JUST SO HAPPENED to be a church...
- called Sunrise Church.

And listen, I had no interest in Jesus, or God...

- I just wanted to get my hours,
- and get back to my life.
- So, I cleaned the church for community service.
- And that was it.

Until a couple of years later, a friend invited me to go to his youth group.

- Just out of the blue, he said,
- *“Hey, you wanna go to my youth group with me?”*

And I was very much Agnostic...

- like, I was not seeking at all.
- But we were friends, so, I went.

And as we pull up,

- it JUST SO HAPPENED...
- that he went to the Sunrise Church youth group.

And I want to be really honest with you.

- It was the most kitschy,
- ridiculous youth group thing ever.

The youth group was called *Extreme Teens*,

- and the T in the logo was a cross, ok?
- IN POPYRUS FONT!

And they would sing songs spelling things out:

- I am a C...
- I am a CH...
- I am a CHR, ok?
 - And I went to public school,
 - So, it took me a couple of times through
 - to realize they were spelling CHRISTIAN...
 - I thought maybe they were speaking in tongues...

But everything about it, I thought, *“This is absurd. This is ridiculous.”*

ILLUSTRATION: YOUNG LIFE

And in the same year, another friend invited me to go to Young Life.

- Which was a Christian club that met in his basement.
 - A bunch of people singing songs...
 - and listening to some guy preach...
 - in a basement...
 - sounded like a cult, but whatever.

So, I go to his basement, and I noticed a brochure for Young Life, with a picture of the President of the organization: Denny Rydberg.

And it JUST SO HAPPENED that I knew Denny.

He had been my basketball coach the year before.

But I had no idea he was the president of Young Life!

- And now I’m hearing a message about Jesus,
- In my buddy’s basement,
- and I JUST SO HAPPEN to know
 - the president of Young Life personally.

And I started putting these coincidences together in my head.

- What are the chances that the place I did my community service WAS the SAME church I was invited to years later?
- And what are the chances that my basketball coach turns out to be the leader of a ministry where I end up hearing the Gospel?

And as much as I thought those groups were kinda lame and silly,

- I couldn't stop thinking about it!
- And after group, my friend would say,
 - *"You want to go next week?"*
- And I'd be like,
 - *"We gonna sing I am a C again?"*
 - *"Yeah! Pick me up at 6?"*

And I didn't know it then, but this is called the effectual call of God.

- God was after me.
- God was wooing me.
- I just didn't know it.

It just felt like,

- *"There's something here.*
- *This can't be mere coincidence.*
- *I need to get to the bottom of this."*

And a couple summers later, in 2001, I bowed the knee to Christ as Lord, and nothing in my life has been the same.

- Twenty years later,
- everything about the trajectory of my life has changed.

GOD MOVES IN OUR ORDINARY

APPLICATION

Let me ask you:

- Are you not *feeling* God right now?
- You *feel* like your spiritual life is a bit drab right now?
- Does everything *feel* kinda like you're just
 - chasing some stupid donkeys right now?

God might be right on the cusp of breakthrough.

I emphasize the word *feel* because I think this might be where we get hung up. If we don't *feel* like God is working.

You see, God doesn't always work in those obvious moments,

- *"Oh look!*
- *There he is!*
- *That's GOD!*
- *I can feel it!"*

No, often he is so much more subtle than that.

- God often hides his work
- among the everyday shuffle
- and routine of life.

TRANSITION

You don't see God working in your life right now?

This text shows us that God is at work...

- in the carpet vacuuming,
- beard shaving,
- dinner eating,
- carpooling,
- term paper writing,
- appointment keeping...
- routines of life.

Don't miss the hand of the Lord working behind a couple of lost donkeys.

APPLICATION 2

And the second application for us today. Look once again at verse 16.

1 SAMUEL 9:16

[16] "Tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over my people Israel. He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have seen my people, because their cry has come to me."

Did you see that?

- You'll anoint him over MY PEOPLE.
- He shall save MY PEOPLE.
- I have seen MY PEOPLE,
- and heard MY PEOPLE'S cry.

God seems to be very concerned for his people.

He is acting compassionately towards his people.

Now, that wouldn't be odd, if it weren't for what we studied last week in chapter 8.

- Were God's people being faithful when asking for a king?
- Were God's people heeding the warning given to them concerning this king?
- Were God's people concerned at all about fully trusting in God?

NO!

Look back to 1 Samuel 8 verse 7:

SLIDE 1 SAMUEL 8:7

[7] And the LORD said to Samuel, "Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them."

- They have rejected God in their demand for a king!
- They want their way, not God's way...
- and he's going to give it to them!

BUT even in this judgment...

- he is concerned...
- he is compassionate...
- he is showing mercy.

Yes, GOD MOVES IN OUR ORDINARY. But also:

SLIDE GOD PURSUES IN OUR FOOLISHNESS

- In spite of our folly,
- and our stubbornness,
- and our stupidity,
- and our demands,
- and our rebellion,
- and our sin...
- the Lord's pursuit of you NEVER CEASES!

HE NEVER GIVES UP ON YOU!

God's pursuit of his people, even in their idolatry, is something to marvel at!

ILLUSTRATION: YOUTH CAMP

Now, I'm an expert in this, too,

- because once I did start going to that youth group,
- we had a little thing called youth camp.

And youth camp was THIS for me.

It happened every single year this way:

On the last night of camp. The speaker would preach and preach.

- And we were all hopped up on pixie sticks and Mountain Dew...
- And we had only had like three hours of sleep the whole week,
- So, we were ready to dedicate our lives to a Christmas tree.

But they'd play good, emotional worship music, and they'd say,

"Come on, and ask Jesus into your heart."

- And I'd do it every single time.
- Like every single year.

- At camp on the last night,
 - through tears
 - and hugs
 - and snot
 - and promises...

I would commit my life... *“God, I’m never going to be the same again.”*

And listen, I did everything they said to do...

- I promised,
- and I came forward,
- and I wrote my sins down
 - and nailed them to a cross,
 - or burned them in a can,
 - or threw them in a lake,
 - or baked them in a cake...

And I was like,

- *“God, when I get home...*
- *I’m gonna break up with her...*
- *I’m gonna start obeying them...*
- *I’m gonna stop doing this or that!”*

And I’ll tell you, I almost always had a couple of good weeks, after camp.

- But slowly, the things that I had promised to stop doing,
 - started to creep back into my life.
- And after a month or two,
 - I was almost always,
 - back into my previous lifestyle.

And I would say,

- *“How did I get here again!?!”*
- *Dang, I need camp again...when is that?*
- *11 months!!!*
- *I need to FEEL God again!”*

And I just felt like I'd let God down...

- like he was disappointed with me...
- like I had really screwed things up.

ILLUSTRATION: CAR FAX

But listen, the illustration I've historically uses is of a CarFax...
it's like God ran a Carfax on you, and the report was not good. It read:

- Broken.
- Been in an accident.
- Leaks oil.
- Lemon, lemon, lemon...
- **DO NOT BUY THIS CAR!**

But it's like God got the report, and he didn't change his mind about choosing you!

He's not looking to return you to the dealership and go,

- *“Hey, you sold me a lemon!”*
 - *This one is broken.*
 - *I didn't see it before.*
- *It looked really pretty on the lot.*

- *And then I got it home*
- *and this thing fell off...*
- *this started smoking.*
- *And I don't want it anymore."*

No! **God knew what he was getting when he purchased you.**

Did you hear that?

- He knows we stumble and bumble.
- He knows we're fools.
- And yet, he chose you!

The message to us, over and over again, in the Bible is this:

- *"I chose you. Yeah you fell down. Get up.*
- *I've got you. I knew this was coming. Get up.*
- *I paid for that. Yeah, you blew it. Now get back up.*
- *I've covered that with my blood.*
 - *Yeah, you got confused again.*
 - *Yeah, you let pride creep in again.*
- *I know; I paid for that. Now get up.*
- *Let's keep going. I'll get you there."*

And he doesn't just buy that junky car, and set it in the garage. No!

- He begins a full restoration process until it is perfect.
- We call that progressive sanctification.
- God making you into the man or woman
- you are supposed to be.

God knew exactly what he was getting with you when he picked you...

AND HE STILL PICKED YOU!

This is the good news!

HE PURSUES IN OUR FOOLISHNESS.

BLANK SLIDE W/PADS

CONCLUSION

So, this story about lost donkeys shows us

- that GOD MOVES IN OUR ORDINARY
- and that GOD PURSUES IN OUR FOOLISHNESS.

And maybe today you're doubting God's love for you...

- because you don't *feel* him,
- or *sense* him working,
- or *see* what he's up to...

But maybe that's because

- you need to stop looking for him in the big things,
- and start looking for him in your everyday life.

Just because you don't *feel* God, doesn't mean he's not working.

What if all the JUST SO HAPPENED moments in your life were a part of God's perfect plan for you?

GOD MOVES IN OUR ORDINARY.

Or maybe you're doubting God's love for you because of your foolishness.

You're like,

- *"There is no way he wouldn't want me,*
- *after all I've done.*
- *I've just let him down again, and again, and again."*

And if that's you, listen...

- I don't care what you've done.
- I don't care what you want to lay before me.
- **God is relentless in his pursuit of his people.**

You feel like that beater car?

- God knows you, and he chooses you...
 - with all the dents,
 - dings,
 - and scratches that come along with you.

And all you have to do is ask him to be your savior...to be your Lord.

To get up once again!

What do we learn from a couple of lost donkeys?

- God is moving
- and God is pursuing.

Let's pray.

RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – fathomchurch.org/give
- PRAYER - fathomchurch.org/prayer
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

RESOURCES USED:

- Davis, Dale Ralph. Focus on the Bible: 1 Samuel.
- Davis, Dale Ralph. *The Great Donkey Cover-Up*.
- Estes, Steve. *The Sovereignty of God in the Anointing of Saul*.
- Tsumura, David Toshio. NICOT: The First Book of Samuel.